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TOM EWING

— OR —

The Spy of Chancellorsville

A
DRAMA
IN THREE ACTS



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meat.

PS 635
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Tom Ewing

OR

The Spy of Chancellorville



DRAMATIS PERSONAE.



TOM EWING, a youth in poverty—A Colonel U. S. A.

BEATRICE ROSEDALE, Captain U. S. A.

ROBERT LEE, Confederate General.

RAY SILVERSTON, Confederate Officer.

IRASHUS, General Hooker's Colored Servant.

MR. ROSEDALE, a wealthy Manufacturer.

MRS. ROSEDALE, his wife.

ETHEL ROSEDALE, their daughter.

HOWARD GRAY, Ethel's Husband.

JOHN BURK, a Friend of Beatrice and Ewing.

Officers, Soldiers, Etc.

TOM EWING

...or...

The Spy of Chancellorsville.

ACT I.

SCENE 1—A Cheap Restaurant.—Workingmen coming in and chatting to one another. A recruiting officer in rear at a table and Tom Ewing seated by himself.

1st Speaker: Well, boys, we ought to be very glad to have this bite to eat after the day.

2d Speaker: Yes, we ought to be thankful for any morsel. We are producing the wealth and then live like beggars.

3d Speaker: Slaves you may say.

4th Speaker: Worse than slaves; for the slave's master has an interest in him. He sees that his slave has something to eat and a place to sleep; but our masters care not whether we starve.

2d Speaker: True you are.. We hear much talk of slavery in the South; but if they want to see real slavery, let them come to Pittsburgh.

3d Speaker: The poor man is a slave everywhere. He is dogged from morning to night in the shop. Everyone is barking at him and the pay he gets is not enough to keep a cat alive.

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5th Speaker. And if he has a family, his children must slave at something to get a mouthful of bread. The whole thing is wrong. One man rides in a carriage; another plods in the slush with broken shoes; one woman lives in luxury, another earns her morsel of bread on the wash-board; one child is spoilt because it has too much, another starves because it has nothing. Talk about humanity! It is all rot! You must work or die; and when you are no longer able to work, you may go to the poor-house.

1st Speaker: Men, you are right; still much of our misery is due to ourselves. If we were united our condition would not be so bad. Some of us are cowards; some are hot-headed, and some squander the little they earn; but there is Tom Ewing and he is not saying a word. Eh, Tom; what have you to say about the poor man's lot?

Tom Ewing: I am keenly interested in your talk; and glad to hear you discuss a subject which bears sharply upon myself. What do I think about the poor man's lot? To be frank with you, it bewilders me. I can not understand why some things are so; but not being able to remedy them, I simply submit and try to live. Some of the rich are doubtlessly hard-hearted; but I can not believe that all are thus.

Burk (Rather advanced in age): Tom Ewing, I rarely met a rich man who had any feelings for the poor. I am old and know a few things. The laborer's

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toil makes the rich man richer ; but the laborer remains a toiler. His lot never grows better. Ay, Tom Ewing, for a young man who has been so shamefully treated, you take a kind view of the rich. What does Rosedale do for you? He will not even give you a chance to work. Tom, I know your history perhaps better than yourself. Your father was a rich man—charitable and kind—the only one I ever met. It was he who put Rosedale on his feet. It was he who made Rosedale a rich man. He helped and encouraged many a one. Would to God we had more like your father! But what does Rosedale do for you? What does he give you in return for your father's great help to him? Nothing but sneers and insults. He will not even give you a job in his great plant.

Tom: Burk, what you say of Rosedale is true; still I can not convince myself that there are many like him. Ingratitude is bitter; it is galling. I know what it is; yet some there must be who are mindful of kindness. All cannot be vile.

Burk: Tom, you are now about 22 years of age. Since you were 15 you have struggled hard enough. You have met the rugged world bravely. Did you meet any of the rich who gave you a helping hand? Some should have thought it an honor to help so brave a boy. Many should have remembered your big-hearted father and your gentle, charitable mother; but where is the single one?

ACT I

Tom: Burk, you are right; yet in all this struggle—and no one knows it all—I believed a higher power was directing me; that the sneers and insults gave me more indurance; that corroding disappointment and base opposition were my teachers. I felt that the black night would not last forever; and when day came, I would have a heart to feel for the miseries of others. Burk, we cannot fathom all that happens; nor assign a reason for everything.

Burk: I am glad you have such pluck. May the ill winds which have tossed you about so long, soon change to prosperous breezes.

Tom: Burk, you have always been my friend. How often you have offered me shelter on stormy nights. Pride, you may think, prevented me from accepting your help. It is not so; I swore in my very soul I would never forget your goodness. You are one of God's nobility.

Burk: I had not much to offer and it grieved me to see you so independent.

Recruiting Officer (sitting in the rear comes front): Pardon me for interrupting your very interesting talk; but I am a recruiting officers authorized to raise a company; I am its captain. Now, young man, (addressing Ewing), I have been listening; if you want to grasp fortune come with me. I will make you my first lieutenant. A young man of your training and

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courage will rise rapidly in the army. What do you say?

Tom: Captain, I grasp at your offer, but at present I must delay my answer. Will you hold the offer open for me?

Officer: You must be one of us. Now, how many more of you will come with me? Here is your lieutenant; a young man whom you all know and think well of. How many of you will follow him?

1st Speaker: I would go with him to fight for my country; but I do not care to be shot to death for any black nigger.

Officer: It is now not a question of slavery but of the Union. The war is on; the battle of Bull's Run is a thing of the past. We must fight, now, whether we like it or not.

Burk: You are right, man. It is one flag now or perhaps a dozen by and by. If we be divided, we can be made a foot ball for every nation to kick. Were I not so old, I would be with you.

2d Speaker: Come, men, we may as well enlist. It is as easy to die on the field of battle for our country as it is to sweat and work ourselves to death in a shop for a tyrant.

ACT I

3d Speaker: I am with you captain; I prefer the Stars and Stripes to the boss' whip.

Officer. All who will follow this brave lieutenant come over with him now to the tent and we shall talk the whole matter over. (Exeunt all but Burk.)

Burk: Tom, a moment.

Tom: Excuse me, captain, I shall follow in a minute.

Burk: Tom, what will become of that affectionate child, Beatrice Rosedale? If you go, her heart will break.

Tom (starts):...What do you mean?

Burk: I know your secret.

Tom: You can not, for no one knows whether I have a secret or not.

Burk: Well, I know that the child loves you. Often has she stopped me on my return from work to inquire for you; and disobedient tears told me the secret of her heart.

Tom: If such is true, Rosedale would scoff and spurn me as he would a vile cur.

SCENE 1

Burk: To hell with Rosedale! The United States is wide.

Tom. Burk, mind you the last dime I had, I paid for that lunch I ate a while ago.

Burk: I have a hundred dollars saved. It is yours.

Tom (grasping his hand): Burk, you are as true as the purest gold.

Burk: It is a duty, my boy. When my oldest child died, it was your father who paid for the coffin which encased my little darling's remains.

Tom: I wish, Burk, that others had as fond a memory as you; still, I can not accept. To take your hard earnings would be cruel. Again, what can I do with a hundred dollars? Drag Beatrice into poverty? No! no! Besides the tears you saw may be pearls of pity, not affection. I believe it's the army now, Burk, for me. If I outlive the war, all may be well.

Burk: If you go you will see the child before you leave the city?

Tom: You are a true friend. If I accept the offer and Beatrice is to be found, I will see her and you, too. Good night, old friend. (Exit Tom.)

ACT I

Burk: Good night, my boy. (Alone.) If I could betray secrets, Tom, I could make pearls come to your eyes, too—pearls not only of pity but of love. (Exit.)

SCENE 2—Garden.—Burk is seen looking around the rear of stage. Passes off and returns with Beatrice.

Burk: You should try to see Tom tonight.

Beatrice: Would that I were able! He is so sensitive and distant. Though unpretentious of his innate powers of mind, still there is a peculiar consciousness in his soul of its own worth which demands of him to suffer rather than seek for aid unearned.

Burk: The poor fellow often needs aid, I tell you. He is too manly to ask; and even when offered, he pushes back the hand of help.

Beatrice: To hear that he was hungry and I had plenty racks my soul. O, Tom! Would that I could tear aside the mask which hides you from yourself and keeps you from me!

Burk: Want keeps him away; or perhaps hope—hope that the clouds of ill-fortune may roll away and he have something worthy to offer you.

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Beatrice: How foolish! Is not his affection more than the whole world?

Burk: Yea, my child, but love does not want its love to know pain or hunger.

Beatrice: Then, surely he ought to come to me!

Burk: Have you seen your father?

Beatrice: No! I have planned to let Ethel into the secret. She may help me with mother. Mother is kind and may be won. Then we could all attack father. But father! He is so hard and cold.

Burk: There is no time to waste. I am afraid it is now too late.

Beatrice: What do you mean?

Burk: I can not tell you.

Beatrice: Is he hurt?

Burk: He was not an hour ago.

Beatrice: Is he going away?

Burk: Perhaps.

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Beatrice: Dear old friend, why pierce my heart with such a dagger? Tell me, I beg!

Burk: I keep his secrets as I keep yours. Come with me, and perchance we may find him.

Beatrice: He is not injured?

Burk: No.

Beatrice: Then wait for me at the old spot. I shall be with you in less than an hour. Here comes Ethel. I must have some good news to tell him. Oh, if I could even tell him that mother loves him! You will wait?

Burk: Would it not be better for me to try and find him and bring him to the old post office in the tree? I do not want to alarm you; but you will weep tomorrow, if you do not see him tonight.

Beatrice: I had better go now!

Burk: You will gain no time; for if he is to be found, I can save time by bringing him to you.

Beatrice: When will you be at the old place?

Burk (looks at his watch): If I can find him where I expect, I shall be there about 10 o'clock.

SCENE 2

Beatrice: If you do not, I will wait all night there for you. So be sure to bring him to me. (Burk leaves.) Now, hurry; may your angel lead you to him. Now for Ethel. I saw her down in the garden. (Walks toward rear side of stage and calls): Ethel, come; I want to see you. (Ethel enters.) I am delighted to see you and want a favor from you.

Ethel: Oh, it is the favor which delights you; or is it myself?

Beatrice: Ethel, this is severe; yet had I never a favor to ask, you would be dear to me.

Ethel: You know, Beatrice, that dear is declineable—dear, dearer, dearest. I may be dear to you, but the favor may be dearer.

Beatrice: Ethel, you may weigh me in the scales of your nice distinctions, I shall not complain, but only give me your help.

Ethel: Help in what?

Beatrice: I am tortured, Ethel, on the rack of fear. A favor I ask of you that you and I and mother may obtain a greater favor for me from father. The ghastly spectre of refusal harrows my soul! Pity me! and help me first with mother.

ACT I

Ethel: I am like one lost in darkness; I can not see your purpose.

Beatrice: Promise me you will be patient with me if that purpose meets not your approval.

Ethel: It is not easy to make a promise about a thing of which I am ignorant; yet I suppose I can be patient.

Beatrice: You know Tom Ewing?

Ethel: Yes, what of it?

Beatrice: You know, also, that, as children, he and I were friends.

Ethel: I know you were companions.

Beatrice: True, but that companionship made us friends; and that friendship, as a budding flower, opened up the heart to something,—Oh! I would speak it but my tongue falters—that word is too sacred for my lips to touch!

Ethel: Perchance that sacred thing is love.

Beatrice: It is.

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Ethel: Well, I helped you speak it and have desecrated that very sacred thing with the profanity of speech.

Beatrice: If you will not help, you ought at least not barb your words with cruel scorn.

Ethel: Help you in such a mad enterprise?

Beatrice: I cannot perceive more madness in my purpose than in yours. Do you not love Howard Grey?

Ethel: Well, now that's silly. Why, Miss, there is no comparison between Howard and that beggar Tom Ewing. Howard is the son of an influential gentleman. He has wealth, refinement and a lucrative office. His marriage to me will confer on our family distinction, influence and high social standing. Tom Ewing has nothing, and your wild, mad notions will bring disgrace upon us all.

Beatrice: Tom Ewing has nothing! Well, he has brains, what Howard has not. Moreover he has intellect to use his brains. Howard would not know what to do with brains if he had them. Howard is greedy and selfish; Tom Ewing has a heart as big as a mountain and as tender as the rose. Howard has the wealth which his father's rapacity accumulated; Tom Ewing had a father as generous as the exhaustless fountain

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which is fed by the pure snows of the peak; and a mother as sweet as an angel and as meek as a saint. You are welcome to Howard's legacy; give me Tom Ewing for mine!

Ethel: When you are starving, we shall see how delighted you will be with Tom's fine qualities.

Beatrice: And when you are weeping, we shall see what solace you will find in Howard's gold.

Ethel: Enough! To bandy words is folly. Father will never permit the realization of your wild dreams. To mention them to him will only provoke his wrath and bring displeasure upon you. Good-day. (Exit.)

Beatrice: Well, if that is not a kind, affectionate sister. Her haughtiness may yet be changed into tears by her sweet, rich blockhead—Howard Gray. I wish I had not said a word to her about the matter; but now I have crossed the Rubicon and the next step forward in misery is to talk with mother. I must hurry before Ethel tattles the news to her. (Exit.)

(Beatrice returns with her mother.)

Mrs. Rosedale: What you say no truthful person will deny. Tom Ewing is a good young man but his poverty is an impediment which your father will not condone.

SCENE 2

Beatrice: Mother, you are kind and considerate; but why should father object to Tom because he is poor. Riches are not all. Indeed, they are after all a small part of any person's true value. Wealth is but the gloss; and if a virtuous character is not underneath, the gloss wears off and only the base metal remains..

Mrs. Rosedale: You are wise in your remarks, but youthful affection blinds you to the hardships of want. To be sure your father could open the path of success to Tom, but here is where the gate of opposition is met and I think you will not be able to unlock it.

Beatrice: O, mother! had I the key it would soon be thrown wide open. If Tom only had a chance to prove himself, father could not help liking him. Opportunity is stingy with him. Were father to give him the opportunity, the time would come when he would be repaid, for Tom is not an ingrate.

Mrs. Rosedale: My child, temper your desires with prudence. I do not think it will help you much to see your father; still you may try. Indeed I am glad you have such courage. I admire you for it and consider Tom Ewing deserving of it. Tom was not always poor. Before his father and mother died, he was nursed amid plenty. He was only a child and his guardian squandered Tom's heritage. Had his parents lived, Tom need not beg for a position to earn his bread.

ACT I

Beatrice: Still is not Tom the same person struggling with want, that he was when caressed by fortune? It appears to me, if there is a difference that difference makes him better; for want necessitates effort and effort enlarges the view of things; and seeing things as they are, gives experience, while experience teaches what ourselves and others are.

Mrs. Rosedale: Tom has had experience enough, sad and cruel indeed; I pity him. No wonder he is good; he was fed on goodness by a generous father and a loving mother. People do not know this, and if they did, they would care very little. As you suggested a while ago, the jewel is lost in the setting.

Beatrice: Mother, I ever thought you good and kind; still I did not think enough of you. I did not know you as you are. If you will plead my cause with father, I am convinced he will listen to your persuasive words of tenderness and truth.

Mrs. Rosedale: My darling child, I would speak for you and in your fondness be well repaid, but it is useless. Your father is cast in a mould formed by business experience. He estimates values by the market price. He would simply tell me I am sentimental.

Beatrice: But will you not try? If you fail, I shall have lost nothing which is not already lost; and if you win, I will pray every day of my life and every

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minute of every day that God may bless you with blessings as sweet and great and lasting as He is infinite!

Mrs. Rosedale: Beatrice, you have a noble soul. I am proud of you; but listen: Father will be here soon. You appeal to him; and if the occasion favor, I will help you win your petition.

Beatrice: O, mother! I tremble at the thought. I am timid; I cannot be calm, and rashness will spoil all; still I shall do as you say. Oh, do help me mother and—(Mr. Rosedale enters. Takes a newspaper from his pocket and reads)—(whispers to her mother.)

Mr. Rosedale: Good evening. When will supper be ready?

Mrs. Rosedale: Shortly. You must be hungry and tired.

Mr. Rosedale: Yes, a good deal of both.

Beatrice (standing by his side): . Father, I know you must be weary, but I trust your kindness will pardon me for interrupting you.

Mr. Rosedale: I would rather not be interrupted.

Beatrice: Just for a few moments, father. I shall not take up much of your time.

ACT I

Mr. Rosedale: Well, what is it?

Beatrice: Do you know Tom Ewing?

Mr. Rosedale: Slightly.

Beatrice: Do you not think him honest and reliable?

Mr. Rosedale: Perhaps.

Beatrice: He and I, as children, went to school together.

Mr. Rosedale: Well, if you did. There is nothing uncommon about children attending school.

Beatrice: He is now desirous of obtaining a position; can you assist him?

Mr. Rosedale: There is no vacancy in the office and I do not care to create one to accommodate him.

Beatrice: He thinks a good deal of a girl; and if he could earn a fair salary, you would make both happy and bestow a great favor upon me.

Mr. Rosedale: Beatrice, I am not just now running an almshouse.

SCENE 2

Beatrice (kneeling by his side:) Tom Ewing is poor enough, but the girl's father is rich and could help both if he wished.

Mr. Rosedale: Well, that's none of my business; and if the girl's father will not help him, why should I?

Beatrice: But the girl begs her father to help him and the father will not comply with his daughter's prayer.

Mr. Rosedale: You appear well posted in their business, but who is the girl and who is the father in whom you are so foolishly interested?

Beatrice: The girl is kneeling by your side, and—

Mr. Rosedale: No; No, I say! You want to be overtures of marriage to you! The beggar wants to drag you down to his level. No, no; no more of this fudge!

Beatrice: Instead of his dragging me down, give me the means to lift him up.

Mr. Rosedale: No; No, I say. You want to be very romantic. Dine a few times on romance and you will cease your nonsense. I have a more promising fish for you to catch, and I shall help you hold the line and will furnish you with attractive bait.

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Mrs. Rosedale (crocheting): My good husband, listen to poor Beatrice. Money does not always give happiness. If she is content, she will be happy with very little.

Mr. Rosedale: Shame, woman! Do you want me to throw away the reputation which required years of constant application to establish? I care not for your importunities. Time has made me wise. You should not encourage such folly.

Mrs. Rosedale: Still you ought to consider your child's happiness as well as your own interests.

Mr. Rosedale: I am doing both. This young man is a son of my partner. He has grown up with the business and is an expert in every department of the works. He is a better catch in every way than Tom Ewing, and besides he carries a large part of the stocks of the firm. Let Beatrice marry him and all our interests will be united.

Beatrice: Who is this young man?

Mr. Rosedale: Harry Jamerson. You have met him.

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Beatrice: Yes, I know him. He went to school when I did. Father, you overrate him. Tom Ewing could teach him. Tom has more brains in his finger nails than Harry carries in his weak, empty cranium. Why—

Mr. Rosedale: Enough, Madam, enough! You will marry Mr. Jamerson.

Beatrice: Father, you never gave Tom a trial. Test him, and if you do not find him a giant in intellect, a friend in adversity, a hero in danger, and a toiler without a peer, then I shall marry Jamerson!

Mr. Rosedale: Indeed! Well, you would be an old woman before I could finish such a test.

Beatrice: I am willing to wait.

Mr. Rosedale: But you will not wait. There are other girls and Jamerson needs not wait for you.

Beatrice: Then he don't need to.

Mr. Rosedale: What! Madam, do not venture too far with your impertinence.

Beatrice: Father; I did not intend to offend you, but know this: I shall never marry Jamerson! (Beatrice sinks into her mother's arms.)

ACT I

(Father stands gazing in anger at her. Bell rings for supper. Father turns and walks to dining-room.)

Mrs. Rosedale: Come! your heart must be heavy and sad; but come and have some supper.

Beatrice: Mother, you are kind; but father and I may have some hot words, so I shall eat later.

Mrs. Rosedale: Very well, child; but do not kill yourself with fretting. This will do Tom no good. Tell him I am his friend and that he must not want as long as I have a dollar or a loaf of bread.

Beatrice: How good, mother, how good. Now go to supper. (She walks with her mother to the dining-room door.)

(As Beatrice turns, Ethel enters.)

Ethel: You ought to be ashamed of yourself for disturbing father so.

Beatrice: I am deeply sensitive of the annoyance I give father; but I want you to understand that I never did anything to bring the blush of shame to my cheek. If you and father do not like Tom Ewing, I pity you both.

Ethel: You save your pity for yourself. You

SCENE 2

seem to have a large amount of that commodity. Keep it, keep it for yourself and that unbearable puppy upon whom you dote!

Beatrice: You are quite sarcastic; still give me a nice little puppy any time in preference to a bull-dog like Howard Grey.

Ethel: What! you audacious thing! You are beneath contempt! Howard, I have you know, is no beggar, but a gentleman of the purest refinement.

Beatrice: I cannot comprehend how any person can possess refinement without a heart.

Ethel: Howard has a heart as good and—

Beatrice: Yes, a cast iron one.

Ethel: If I were father, I would fling you out of the house.

Beatrice: And if I were mother I would put a muzzle on you.

Ethel: You are insufferable.

Beatrice: And you are most gentle.

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Ethel: Well, you will not soon forget the scene you acted just now. Father is no fool with you.

Beatrice: It is a father's privilege to reprimand his child. Though he is ungracious with me, he is still my father; and as to the scene, no, I shall not easily forget it, nor your gentleness toward me. I shall keep a photograph of both locked up in my memory for reference.

Ethel: Were mother as wise as father, you would discontinue your mad freaks.

Beatrice: That will do! Not a word against mother! She is too gentle and loving for your sarcasm. Leave her untarnished and free from your vile comparisons. If you hate me, I shall bear your hatred with patience, but you will not utter one word of reproach against that mother who has only kindness and tears for me.

Ethel: She might spare her kindness and tears. They are only thrown away on you.

Beatrice: Very well. I shall not dispute that point; but freely admit I am a child unworthy of so fond a mother. But I did not come to quarrel with you. I came to see mother.

Ethel: You had better go to Tom Ewing.

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Beatrice: You had better not sully his name by the touch of your ugly lips. (Exit.)

Ethel: There goes a baggage of conceit and madness. (Exit to supper.)

SCENE 3—A Grove.

Beatrice (enters): It is about the hour, but they are not here. O, Guarding Angel, bring them to me! Perhaps they will come this way. I shall walk to meet them. It is so lonely. (Exit. After a few moments Burk and Tom enter.)

Tom: Here are the old grounds where we used to play. Often I have come here, and lived the old hours over again. What help and sadness, Burk, there are in old memories!

Burk: Here is the spot I told her to meet you. It is now the time. So cheer up!

Tom: Burk, there is no use to weep over spilt milk, and it is just as foolish to fret over what might have been. The poet was nearly right, I believe, when he said that "Life is made up of drops of joy with draughts of ill between." The worst of it is, I do not even get the drops.

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Burk: Never mind, Tom, you will have the drops and the draughts later on. You will be marching home a general to us. Then Beatrice and yourself need not heed Rosedale's sneers.

Tom: Fate may be more lenient to me in the army. At least a bullet may put an end to all the cynical insults. After all the grave is a merciful doctor.

Burk: The doctor and the undertaker are two men I do not care to shake hands with; and for the insults, fire them to Old Nick. Beatrice ought to be here at any moment, now. I did not say a word to her about your enlistment. She will be heart-broken, I am sure.

Tom: Burk, she may not care for me; still, she has been kind, often offering me money. Before leaving I would like to know whether she has forgotten old times. If she has, then war has attractions and death is welcome. Considering things in the cold calculation of dollars and cents, I do not blame her, if she is too wise to share my wretchedness. I am poor and have been unfortunate; still, I will brave ill-luck; and, Burk, wherever I die, I will leave no stain upon the memory of my honored father and kind, good mother.

Burk: That is manly, Tom; but never mind your ill-fortune. Were you a king, Beatrice would not

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think so much of you. It is your ill-fortune which binds you to her. Your ills are your blessings. There she comes. Be kind to her. You know not what arrows she carries in her own heart. I shall see you at the train. (Exit.)

Beatrice (enters): Tom, I have been looking for you. I was here a while ago and not seeing you, I thought I would meet you. Our dear old friend, Mr. Burk, promised to find you for me. I was longing to see you. How are you? Oh, it is so long since we met!

Tom: I was wishing and praying that you would come here tonight.

Beatrice: That was kind; I thought no one cared to see me.

Tom: Kinder of you, for you are the only one who looks for me, except ill-luck, and she always finds me.

Beatrice: Your luck appears, indeed, evil, but who knows, it may be an angel in disguise.

Tom: Well, then, it must be a guardian angel, for he so often leads me to you. But luck may now change since I have entered a new career.

Beatrice: Pray, what do you mean?

ACT I

Tom: To-night I enlisted and to-morrow I start for the Army of the Potomac.

Beatrice: Enlisted! (She flings her arms about him and sobs.)

Tom: O, Beatrice! what joy you give me.

Beatrice: And now you are going to leave me!

Tom: Give me that handkerchief which contains those precious tears. I will wear it next my heart. When the battle is the fiercest, I will think of those priceless jewels which it contains; and should I fall, then your tears will commingle with my blood—our love will then be united.

Beatrice: You must not think of dying!

Tom: Nor will I, for now I have something for which to live.

Beatrice: You had that all the time.

Tom: But I did not know it. Why did you not speak before now?

Beatrice: I might put the same question to you. Indeed, you seemed distant with me and sometimes appeared to repel the friendship I proffered.

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Tom: O, Beatrice! I loved you from childhood; and when the clouds of adversity settled down upon me, I loved you more. But when my loving parents left me alone, I soon, even as a boy, found myself destitute. The friends who should have helped me had they any gratitude for my dead paernts' helpfulness to them, turned away. Yea; this was not all, Beatrice; they would not give me a chance to earn my bread. When I saw all this, how could I inrtude upon your affections. I was poor and—

Beatrice: I was rich. Don't be so cruel, Tom! Don't be so cruel! (Sobs.)

Tom: Beatrice, we know each other now, though it is late. We meet to part. Still if there is the least element of pain in my words, I plead with you for pardon. Amidst all the stings and shafts of misfortune, you were my friend: and if I said I was poor and would have added the words you took from my lips, I beg you know that many who ought to be my friends, with cynical tongue, told me I was poor and gave me to understand the vast distinction between poverty and wealth.

Beatrice: I pity you, Tom! A thousand pities I have ever carried in my heart for you; and though we must part, there is happiness in knowing that you love me.

Tom: Love you, Beatrice; you who so often

ACT I

wiped away the tears of bitter disappointment from my soul; you who in childhood would run to me and share with me whatever good you had.

Beatrice: O, those were happy days!

Tom: Happy, indeed, they were, but since that happy time what torments I have suffered! Don't think me childish, Beatrice, but often I have wept myself to sleep with the picture of my fond parents and dear Beatrice in my soul.

Beatrice: I am sorry I was not kinder to you, but I feared you might reject me on account of the many false friends you have met.

Tom: The fault is mine. Want made me know my place; and if I happened to forget, there were friends anxious to remind me of it. Now, I am happy, the past is gone, and the joy you give me is greater than it could be, if I never knew pain.

Beatrice: But we must part so soon!

Tom: Yes, still a moment of this joy compensates for all the past. Besides, Beatrice, I have been fortunate already in the army. I have received the commission of lieutenant. The clouds may roll away and I win in war what my so-called friends would prevent me from winning in peace. Beatrice, I was dying

SCENE 3

to see you before I left. I shall write you often and may be the war will not last long. You shall be ever in my thoughts, and may heaven grant that we meet again! I am now late, and must hurry to the camp. Give me now this token and memory of this sad but yet happy parting. (She gives him the handkerchief.) No jewel is so precious! Adieu, Beatrice, Adieu! (They part.)

Beatrice: May God keep you safe. (Looking after him.) Tom, you think we are parted. Never! We will live or perish together!

CURTAIN.



ACT II.

SCENE 1—Camp.—Four soldiers bear in a wounded captain accompanied with Tom Ewing and Murphy. Armed soldiers marching, etc.

Tom Ewing (now a colonel): Halt! Let us see how our wounded captain has stood the journey from the field. (Stoops over him.) Is the wound giving you much pain and are you losing much blood?

Captain Rosedale (feebly): I owe to you two young men my life. If I live I will try to compensate you at least in some measure for that daring act of courage which saved my life and exposed your own. (Addressing Tom.) May I ask your name?

Tom Ewing: Here take a drink. (Holds canteen to his mouth.) My name is Tom Ewing. (Rosedale covers his face feebly with his arm and answers nothing.)

Jack Murphy (bends over the captain): I hope ye are not mortally wounded and that ye are not enduring much pain. Whenever ye want special help, ask for Jack Murphy, and I will sa ye as often as I can.

Tom Ewing: Captain Rosedale, this short rest is sufficient to restore vitality until you reach the medical sergeant. (To the soldiers): Now, men, bear him carefully to the doctor's tent. (Exeunt all except Captain Murphy and Tom.)

SCENE 1

Jack: Tom, ye know the captain, I sa. When he recognized ye, he appeared confuddled. He cannot be yer enemy, or ye never would endanger yer life in sich a hard rescue.

Tom: Why, Jack, you displayed more bravery than I.

Jack: But that was chaffy bekase ye were in danger.

Tom: I spotted him some months ago when he came to the front. He did not, however, know me. I saw him today as the division to which he belongs, came up to support the skirmishers. It was a clever feint on the part of the rebs. to test our strength. But Jack, you are the most loyal friend I ever had, except one other. To-day I would have been a corpse but for your timely aid. Twice before you covered me with your life. During the bayonet charge at Antietam, my comrade on the right fell dead at my side. The Confederate soldier opposed to him, being thus released, turned his bayonet upon me and would have found my heart, but you, regardless of your own safety, bared your breast to the shock of the adversary to protect me. You wounded the man and saved me, but your life was forfeited, had not a random bullet stopped the bayonet within a few inches of your breast. At the fierce battle of Fredericksburg, you again gave proof of your marvelous friendship. I tell you, Jack, I cannot account for your attachment to me. On both those

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occasions I was dead but for your daring defense. You are brave and expose yourself to every danger for me.

(Both sit some distance apart on cracker boxes.)

Jack: Arrah, Tom, ye spake a grate dale about me bravery, but ye says nothing about yer own. Sure toime and again ye have fought like a damon for me. Fur two years we have stood side be side and surely I could not sa ye in danger and not defend ye. Ye have niver in ony danger deserted me, but iver ready to risk yer loife for moine.

Tom: From the time we first met, I regarded you as a friend; and you were never anything else. Memory goes back today, Jack Murphy, to that first meeting, and believe me, I am proud of your attachment and friendship.

Jack: Ye spakes about yer memory. Is it the captain whom ye called Rosedale that started it a pounding. I percaved that he could not have changed cullers faster if a rebel had given him a jab of a bayonet than when ye told him yer name.

Tom: Yes, Jack, that same Rosedale tapped a tender spot today.

Jack: Ye knew him before, then?

SCENE 1

Tom: Knew him? Yes, indeed, I knew him. That man whose life you and I saved in that charge, treated me often like a dog. A dog! did I say? Why, Jack, his own dog he would treat well; but I was in a manner a strange, repulsive dog!

Jack: Begobs, I can't understand thot. Ye are sich a clane-harted, foine harted soldier, thot anyone mistrating ye, must be a lunatic. But why such awful risk to save yer enemay? Sure I would let him go to hell; and the quicker, the better it would plaze me.

Tom: You remember I told you that you are the best and truest friend I ever had except one other.

Jack: Begorra, I do, and I am a bit jealous.

Tom: Well, Murphy, that other friend is Rose-dale's daughter.

Jack: Faix, I sa now; but tell me something about that girl who is me rival in yer estame.

Tom: The story is so sacred to me that to none other would I speak about it; but since you have often revealed your soul to me, and since in some engagement we may part forever, I want you to find her and tell her of my love. I will begin by telling you that she and I were children together. A lovely child she was, with wavy, golden hair and eyes as bright and gentle

ACT II

as the stars, and lips as rosy and as well chisled as a mother ever kissed. Kind she was, indeed. Her apple she would never eat alone, but come to me and cut it, giving the larger part to me. I would remonstrate, begging her to keep the bigger piece but without avail.

Jack: But ye must have been koind to her. Koindness is not all one-sided, and koindness unnoticed is soon dead and buried.

Tom: My kindness was only a trifling thing compared with hers.

Jack: I knows ye too well fur thot, but how did it come about that ye disloikes her dad?

Tom: Jack, you see my parents died when I was young. My guardian in whom they had explicit faith cheated me out of the estate. A few hundred dollars was all I had. I economized the best I could; still it gradually disappeared and I was without a cent. In the meantime I sought employment in many places. Luck conspired to ruin me. Finally I appealed to Rose-dale for a clerkship in his office. He refused. I begged him then to listen to me, but he spurned with haughty scorn my entreaties.

Jack: The cruel scoundrel to trate you so unnatural.

SCENE 1

Tom: Yes, Murphy, it was hard to bear ; but that same man who almost kicked me from his office, could not have the power to insult me, had it not been for my father.

Jack: Colonel, I do not ketch yer maning.

Tom: That man was lifted out of nothing by my father and ushered into the highway of prosperity.

Jack: I sa, now. Thot's why the child loikes ye. They all loiked ye when yer father was rich ; but when yer father was dead and ye poor, then none loiked ye.

Tom: Jack, you are in part right, in part wrong. That child was too young to know the bitter, galling difference between poverty and wealth.

Jack: Do ye think she loved ye when ye were poor?

Tom: That gentle, kind forwardness of children disappeared ; still I thought she loved me.

Jack: Why did ye not test her?

Tom: Want and dejection and fear forbade me. Murphy, you might have never known want, but I have. Want with harsh censure makes one know his

ACT II

place, and I was in depths of want. A stable loft was my lodging, and often, often did I sleep there hungry and cold. None knew this but myself. In my forlorn condition I still hoped she loved me. This was the only glimmering light, the only star of hope; and fear prevented me from opening my lips to her lest this star would be eclipsed.

Jack: Yer lot was sad indade. No wonder ye are brave in the field of battle, when ye were so brave in the cold clutch of misery. But ye still think a grate dale of her, although she was mum.

Tom: Jack, you have not heard all. When war broke out a new field of effort was opened for me. When I told her I had enlisted, it was then she revealed to me in tears the pent-up love of years. She chided me for my coldness toward her, assuring me that the affection of childhood still kept watch over her heart for me.

Jack: Do her letters still brathe love? Sometimes, "The new have charms which the ould have not, and the stranger's face makes the friend's forgot." These are the words of a poet and Irashus says thot I should not be using poetry.

Tom: Since my dim eyes lost sight of her the evening before I left Pittsburg for the front, I have not heard a word from her. I wrote and wrote, but got no reply. Perhaps my letters were intercepted by her fa-

SCENE 1

ther, and I would have become morose and sunk into despondency but for you, my noble friend. In my dejection you took her place, and kindly and braevly you have kept it.

Jack: Arrah, man, I would put her memory in me knapsack for future reference and not trouble me moind about her. Sartantly she could have written ye, even if she did not recaive a letter from ye.

Tom: That would be unjust to her. Maybe she is dead; and if she is, oh, how cruel it would be to her to say or do aught that would be ungracious to her gentle, fond spirit. No, Jack, I have been faithful and will remain thus until the end; but if she is dead, Jack, spare me no more in battle.

Jack: Tom, I always admired yer friendship, and begorra, it is as true as the stael. But have ye her picture? I would loike to take a peep at the face ye love so much. Maybe I haev sane her.

Tom: No, Murphy, I have none.

Jack: Did she give ye no token when ye were parting?

Tom: Her handkerchief is all I have. Here is where I keep it. (Draws it from underneath his shirt and goes and kneels on one knee near Jack.) Don't

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think me childish, Jack. You see its soiled from carrying it so long.

Jack: Why don't ye give it a tastse of soap and water. Sure, I'll wash it for ye, then it will be nice and clane.

Tom: No, Murphy, no water will touch this unless it be the rains which drench us on the march. This was the handkerchief she used when we parted. This contains the tears, jeweled emotions of the heart, which told me she loved me. Here these precious gems will remain until we meet; but should I fall, Jack, steep this handkerchief in my heart's blood and tell her it is mine.

Jack: Begobs, man, ye have a heart as gentle as it is strong; but Tom, ye must have some other messenger to bear that treasure to her; for Tom ye will not fall without me. We have fought side be side till now and death is not going to part us. The one grave will contain us both.

Tom: Jack, I believe the world does not possess your equal in friendship and loyalty to me. Come now let us review our commands. Some hard fighting is ahead of us. Lee will certainly follow up his advantage. (Bugle calls to arms.) There is the bugle calling to arms. If this battle wraps me in death, remember, find Beatrice. (Exeunt.)

SCENE 2—A Parlor in Howard Gray's Home. Ethel seated.

Ethel: Married just one year and a half. It seems a century. How wretched I am; and everything and everyone mocks my misery. I planned for happiness but wedded desolation. Beatrice, how often did I despise you and scorn Tom Ewing. Despair now repays me for my haughtiness and I trust my tears will wash away the wrongs I did my sister. No, no, tears and remorse cannot heal the wounds I made. (Enters Howard.)

Howard: I am going to the club, so don't put on the night bar.

Ethel: When will you be home?

Howard: That's none of your business.

Ethel: It is hard to remain in the house alone when the door is unprotected.

Howard: Very hard, indeed. I want to tell you also that you must make no more purchases without first consulting me. I received a bill of ten dollars to-day for some foolish nonsense you bought.

Ethel: It was not foolish, but necessary. I must have something to wear.

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Howard: You are too expensive; and if you persist in buying, I will notify the merchants that I shall not be accountable for your debts.

Ethel: What do you mean? Do you think I am your slave? If you continue to treat me as you do, I will show you that you cannot act the despot with me any longer.

Howard: Why, pray, what will you do?

Ethel: I will apply for a divorce. Then I can secure an annual allowance from you and you may stay forever at the club.

Howard: Oh, dear, how nice. But I foresaw all this and took precaution against it. You did not care for me. It was my money you were after. I saw your hand and knew your trick. For my part, I would never have noticed you but for your father's business standing. But now he is not worth a thousand dollars. Why, when he was drafted he had not enough money or credit to get a substitute, so he had to go to the army. Through some friends' influence, he obtained, very fortunately for himself, a captain's commission.

Ethel: You need not combine sneers at my father with the indignities you heap upon me. I will investigate and at least you own this house. I shall have a home and you may go.

SCENE 2

Howard: Indeed! Madam, I do not own a slate upon this mansion. You took me for a soft fool, but I noticed and heard your contemptible remarks about Tom Ewing and your sister. You were money mad; but Tom is now your fathers superior officer and the newspapers are full of his praise. How do you both like that? Let me tell you also that if Ewing live, he will be a general within six months.

Ethel: You love to break my heart, but I will see who owns this house.

Howard: You may; still, just to please you a little, let me tell you I disposed of this place a month before we were married. I saw your game and you see, madam, I can play at a game as well as you. I have not one cent's worth of real estate, and my money, you and the law will not find. (Goes out and slams door after him.)

Ethel: Beatrice was right when she intimated you are a bull dog, and that a man without a heart is no man. One year and half have opened my heart and made me wiser, though misreable. (Dries her eyes, etc.) He would not have noticed me but for my father's financial standing. I would not notice Tom Ewing on account of his financial standing and made the heart of good Beatrice bleed by my contemptuous treatment. The accounts are well balanced—contempt with contempt, tears with tears. (Enters Mrs. Roscdale.)

ACT II

Mrs. Rosedale: Ethel, what ails you; you have been crying. Some new trouble?

Ethel: Oh, nothing, mother.

Mrs. Rosedale: People do not weep without a cause. Has Howard been abusing you again?

Ethel: We had a few words.

Mrs. Rosedale: Tell me, for I ought to know. When one shares another's grief, the sorrow is divided.

Ethel: Mother, I cannot tell you; but have you received any news from father? All last night and to-day he was constantly in my mind. I pray he is well.

Mrs. Rosedale: Yes, Ethel, I had a letter from him about two hours ago and hurried to you, to tell you how he is. He received a severe wound and would have been trampled to death, had not Tom Ewing and another soldier called Jack Murphy rescued him from amidst the combatants at the hazard of their lives.

Ethel: Great God! Tom Ewing!

Mrs. Rosedale: Your father writes that Tom is very kind to him and nurses him as if your father had been Tom's dearest friend.

Ethel: Mother, I was wrong and cruel to poor

SCENE 2

Tom. If we ever meet again, I will beg of him to forgive me and forget the past. Kind Beatrice, how often did I taunt you with cutting, piercing words! (Sobs.)

Mrs. Rosedale: The past is gone and your tears cannot blot it out, so do not weep. I hope for Tom's sake that Beatrice is alive. Beatrice was a loving child; clinging like a vine to poor Tom in every storm. It's a pity they are parted and that father was so harsh; but time brings many a change. God shields those who trust in him.

Ethel: I often wonder where Beatrice is. Sometimes I think she entered a convent and buried herself in peace and prayer.

Mrs. Rosedale: No, Ethel, she did not, for they would not receive her in any convent without our consent and letters of commendation.

Ethel: She might have applied at a convent which knew us all and pitied her. Mother, Beatrice's appeal would move the most solid rock. Her tears would gain her admission and compel the most stern to weep with her. None could resist her sighs for help except her heartless sister. (Sobs.)

Mrs. Rosedale: I know not where she is. Perhaps in heaven; or if on earth, may God keep her from every harm. Come, Ethel, let us take a little walk. Your eyes are swollen and your heart is heavy. The

ACT II

air will give you strength and help you to forget your trials. You must stay with me to-night. (Exeunt.)

SCENE 3—Camp.

Tom Ewing: Jack, I tell you we are on the eve of an awful battle. Lee is concentrating his forces with a vim which predicts what we may expect.

Jack Murphy: Ye are roight, Tom. When Lee and Jackson put their heads together, ye may well look for mischief. They are two foine ginerals.

Tom Ewing: This war is a shame. Brother fighting brother. What a pity it is to see two such great generals like Lee and Jackson massing their forces to tear down the stars and stripes.

Jack: It is indade a disgrace, but, Lee is a brave man and belaves he is fighting for a just cause. If they are trying to haul down our flag, in troth we are doing our livel bist to pull down theirs—and there it is fur ye.

Tom: North and South acknowledge Lee's marvelous generalship; still it is deplorable that we should slaughter each other.

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Jack: Faix, mon, thot's what I say. We ought to resarve our strength to foight a foreign enemay, and not be butchering ourselves. But, Tom, if ye want a little philosophy upon the same subject, spake with that black lad Irashus. He is a janus.

Tom: He is, indeed, entertaining. In his droll way and big words, he sometimes gives expression to considerable truth.

Jack: Arrah, its' chunks of wisdom he dales out of his black head. How in the divil he foinds out so much I niver can understand. He says he always lived amongst the "big bugs," and I guess that accounts for some of his big ideas.

Tom: Perhaps that's as good an explanation as any, but I tell you, Murphy, from all appearances the battle of Chancellorsville will go down in history as one of the bloodiest of the war.

Jack: It's lucky for Captain Rosedale he is wounded. He has been saved from the danger of several big skirmishes.

Tom: His luck is bought with a harrowing pain and embarrassment.

Jack: I notice when ye are nursing him with yer koindness, that he is damned uncomfortable. It's

ACT II

thankful he should bay to ye, for in the hubbub of marching ye have carried him from place to place loike a child. I have heard it said, bedad, that if ye want to hape coals of fire upon yer enemay, jist trate him with koindness.

Tom: Jack, whatever acts of compassion I have shown him, they were not done for that puropse. Rose-dale suffers enough without my increasing his torments.

Jack: Begorra, Tom, I niver tried to make me enemay fale unpleasant by haping compassion upon him. It's me fist I would loike to hape upon him; but ye are so koind to the old man after all his maneness to ye, that it befuddles me brain, but I'll state the case to Irashus and he will make ivery thing as clear to me as a dark night without any moon.

Tom: For heaven's sake, Jack, don't speak of this affair to the darky.

Jack: Sure I was only having a joke. Yer secrets are as safe with me as if ye had them locked up in an iron box with the key in the bottom of the dape say. (Enters Irashus.)

Irashus (hands a letter): Col. Ewing, Massa Hooker despatched this cullured child to be the mes-

SCENE 3

senger of an invatashun to you to call as quickly as possibility will permit at his tent.

Jack (shaking hands with him): Why me chocolate friend, I haven't sane ye in many moons. Where have ye bin kaping yersilf?

Irashus: Well, sah, when yo' want to see me, don't be lookin' in any moon for dis chile. Dis heah chile's habitashun am upon de broad bosom of dis yer earth. But Col. Ewing, Massa Hooker am in a first class hurry with you. He am walking up and down and down and up in his tent. Something awful, sah, something awful.

Tom: I shall go immediately. (Starts out.) Good-bye, Jack, until I return.

Jack: Good-bye, old fellow; I hope it's a general he will make ye.

Irashus: It's a mighty fine general, sah, the Colonel would make. A puffoct gentleman is just exactly what he am without any exaggerashuns.

Jack: Say, boss, what do you think of Massa Hooker? Do ye loike him as well as Massa McClellan?

Irashus: Dat am a mighty dangerous proposishun, sah; and dis yere nigger may lose his job. Your

ACT II

understanding ob dem rules ob war am ample proofs ob de danger line being awfully near when an inferior officer stoops to a critical investigashun ob dem superior officers.

Jack: Ye spake the truth, Irashus; but who is going to report ye?

Irashus: I tells you sah, dat dis here nigger has learned in de schools of unlimited experiences dat de fences sometimes hab very long ears, sah. When anyone asks me sah, foh infohmashun on a doubtful or complexed question, I answer with all the simplicity ob a mule, sah, dat dis African don't know nuffin'.

Jack: Irashus, ye have the wisdom of Solomon and the knowledge of an encyclopedia; but say, what do yes think of the situation in the field? Will we wallop the rebels in the next battle or will they wallop us?

Irashus: Dat am a mighty ticklesome queshun, an' in its most deepest profundashun, sah, is obscured by the darkness of future eventuashun. What am tomorrow to bring am eber lost in de fog ob conjecturashun. Lee am a stipendous general, sah. It am in his blood to fight. His ancestral fathers away back to Father Noah wus fighters. I tells yo' sah, I'd rather be in Alabama feasting on 'possum and watermelon than be on the fighting line in the next engagement, sah.

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Jack: Ye think it will be a fierce tussle, then.

Irashus: I doan' like to say much about it, sah. It am such a momenshus queshun. We'll all know de day after how it goes.

Jack: Arrah, the day after we may foind ourselves dead and buried.

Irashus: If yo' is dead and buried, sah, dar will be no finding for yo', sah.

Jack: I am going to sa the end of the war, begobs, if I must sa it from me grave.

Irashus: De Irish am full ob wit an' song, sah. Yestahday I heahs yo' sing like a mocking bird, and often times, sah, I thought ebery rib in dis dareky's carcass am fractured with youah jokes. But, sah, I must be sauntering back to Massa Hooker to see how he am. (Exit.)

Jack (calling after him): We shall mate again after the battle. Well, Irashus, ye are a black diamond, and no mistake. Yer woolly head is as cute as a weasel. Ye knows what side of yer hoe-cake is buttered. But what in the world does Hooker want of Colonel Tom? While I was talking with the nager, I could not put poor Tom out of my mind. A dangerous position for to-morrow will be haped upon him,

ACT II

I am afraid. Arrah, many a tight place I saw him in during the last two years. (Enters Tom.) Be the snakes which niver saw Ireland, I was unazy about yez. What had Hooker to say to ye?

Tom: Jack, it looks as if we must part for at least one night.

Jack: For heaven's sake, Tom, tell me what it all manes.

Tom: General Hooker is alarmed over the outcome of the battle and selected me to penetrate the enemy's lines to-night.

Jack (shows emotion and tries to wipe the tears from his eyes): Tom, for God's sake take me with ye.

Tom: It cannot be. Hating to part with one I know would willingly partake of my danger, I asked the general to let you come with me. He refused, saying that two would arouse suspicion. This is true, but with you I could brave any danger and still feel safe.

Jack (recovering his composure): In troth he ought to permit us to go together. Two heads are better than one, if only at a wedding. I'll ax him mesilf.

Tom: No, Jack, it will not do. He may put me down as a coward, and death before such disgrace.

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Jack: Let me go with ye without his consent. Sure nayther of us will iver return alive. Let us do together. We have stood side by side in many engagements and now to be parted is worse than death.

Tom: Oh, Jack, don't fear, I will return safe and sound. The general has a clever disguise for me.

Jack: When will ye set out on yer lonesome journey?

Tom: Immediately. Night is coming on. It is a beautiful May evening and the stars will keep me company. Permission was granted me to see you, but none other must know the secret. I will be back by dawn.

Jack: Arrah, Tom, I don't want to make yer heart heavy, but ye will niver come back to yer poor broken-hearted Jack Murphy.

Tom: Jack, I understand the danger which lurks in every step. It's my duty. My death, if such it be, is undergone for the stars and stripes and to save, if possible, many a brave boy's life.

Jack: Adieu, Tom; I'll say no more, but God be with ye.

ACT II

Tom (drawing Beatrice's handkerchief from his bosom): Take this, Jack, and should you never see me again, try, after the war is over, to find Beatrice Rosedale and give her this. She will know it and know you are my friend. Tell her that on the eve of death, my last words were of her.

(Jack leans his head for a moment upon Tom's shoulder. Tom shakes hands and turns. Tom exit. Jack sits on a box and buries his head in his hands as the Curtain is dropping.

CURTAIN.

ACT III.

SCENE 1—Forest.

Irashus (wandering): Lord bless us but it am a wonderful time. Skirmishes eberywhere. Nuffin but dead and dying pussons. It am awful! It am awful! War am a desolashun ob de land. De Norf fight like lions an' de Souf fight like tigers. Dere am no 'possum an' watermelon in all dis gol dorned tantelashun. Dis yere nigger must look out foah hisself. Yassah, nigger, yo' had better get into a place uf profound safety while yo' skin am whole. De bullets am no regard fo' pussons ob either sex ob whatsosomebber complexshuns. But

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dis heah nigger am curious to disober where in de whole wide world Captain Jack and Colonel Tom am. Dese yere black eyes am bin lookin' fo' dese white gentlemen all dis blessed mo'ning and can't ketch sight ob dem. Dey am white an' no mistake. Two ob de finest pussons I is eber sawn. I is sahtin dat sum misfortuashun am cum upon dem, like tundah come on a beautiful day. If dey am lost, dis nigger will suttently die. Dis heah army will be as lonesome as de city of de dead. Well, I is sorry in dis heah hart ob mine, but Irashus yo' hadst better betook yo'self out ob danger. I guess dis heah nigger must give de search up. (Two Confederate soldiers level their guns at him as they shout "Halt!" Irashus trembles violently.)

Soldier: Halt! You black coon or we'll blow your damned brains out.

Irashus: Fo' de Lo'd's sake, sah, I was doing nuffin'.

Soldier (lower guns): Another spy.

Irashus: I is no spy, sah, I is an innocent, good fo' nuffin' nigger.

Soldier: What are you doing around here, then?

Irashus: I was looking around dis heah place, sah, to disober if I could see a 'possum.

ACT III

Soldier: You belong to the Yankee army, you black devil.

Irashus: No, sah, I belongs to no ahmy, sah. I is only a poor unfortunate serbant dats come down heah to see who am dead.

Soldier: You know Tom Ewing, the spy?

Irashus: No, sah; I does not know Tom Ewing from de side ob a bahn.

Soldier: Suppose we blow out your black brains for the fun of it?

Irashus: Dar am no fun in dat fo' dis cullo'd chile. (Trembles.) Fo' Lo'd sake massa, let me go an' I'll neber come back heah again.

Soldier (leveling his gun at him): Well, now start for the North Pole as fast as your black legs can carry you. (Irashus runs off.)

Soldier (speaking to the other): That black devil ventured too far. If his black hide is not punctured before he reaches a place of safety he'll be a lucky nigger.

2nd Soldier: He was down here looking for a 'possum; ha, ha, ha!

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1st Soldier: Yes, the damned rascal was down stealing rings off the dead and wounded, but they are all damned Yanks at any rate; and who cares if he does rob them. The damned fools are fighting and dying for them.

2nd Soldier: We ought to have put a hole in his black carcass.

1st Soldier (looking off): Here, Sam, comes another Yank. He has a sort of flag of truce. (2nd Soldier looks off.)

2nd Soldier: Let us stand aside a little and await his coming. This is as safe a place as we can find at present. (Enters Jack Murphy.)

Both Soldiers (leveling muskets upon him): Halt! What brings you here?

Jack: Has a soldier of the North been captured during the night?

1st Soldier: We capture some occasionally. We don't know to which one you refer. What is his name?

Jack: I would rather not tell his name.

1st Soldier: Then, there is no use in asking us

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foolish questions. Tell us his name and we shall, if we can, reply ; otherwise, return to where you belong.

Jack: But I must go on.

1st Soldier: But you mustn't. Understand if you budge one inch forward you are a corpse.

Jack: His name is Tom Ewing.

1st Soldier: Yes, we captured him last night sneaking along our outer works disguised as an old farmer with a basket of tobacco and matches.

Jack: As you, too, are a soldier, I beg you lead me to General Lee's headquarters.

1st Soldier: For what?

Jack: To save, if possible, his life.

1st Soldier: That's a fool's errand. Who sent you?

Jack: No one.

1st Soldier: You left camp without orders? You will be court martialed.

Jack: It is not death I am trying to escape ; it is Tom Ewing's life I must save.

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1st Soldier: You may as well spare your trouble. At 9 o'clock, and it will soon be that hour, he is to be court martialed. The case is dead against him. We found papers upon him which prove he is a spy and you know what that means.

Jack: I know it means death, but I must see General Lee. Will you not lead me to him, or tell me in what part of your field I may find him?

1st Soldier: You must think us silly to tell you where our General's headquarter's are located. You must go back!

Jack: You are a soldier and will not drive back a soldier though he wears the blue, when he seeks his friend before that friend dies.

1st Soldier: You must think we are jackasses to bestow favors upon spies who enter our lines to do with treachery what they cannot do in fair fighting.

Jack: Since you are a brave soldier, were you asked to go on a similar errand, you would not object whether you liked the job or not. It is not a pleasant undertaking to run the risk of your life.

1st Soldier: Well, he has run the risk, and the penalty is death, and this ends our talk. Back, sir, to your own lines!

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Jack: You do not know Tom Ewing or you would permit me to go. I am only doing what one friend will do for another. Tom Ewing has saved my life often and exposed his own for me. If this soldier here had snatched you from the jaws of death, would you not exert yourself to save his life?

1st Soldier: I certainly would.

Jack: Well, to show my loyalty to Tom; to show him I appreciate the dangers he endured for me, I have set forth this morning. If he must die, how dearly he will prize my friendship as I kneel by his side to hear his dying message. Soldier, you are, then listen to me. That spy, as he is now called, is my dearest friend. Soldier, his life story is a mournful one. After a terrific engagement, when I had saved his life, his heart was touched by my friendship to him and he unveiled his soul to me. He related that he had a loving, faithful friend; that her father was blessed with wealth, but this wealth made his heart cold and hard to suffering and to poverty. His own parents had abundance and in their prosperity had helped her father to enter the highway which led to opulence; but after his parents' death, through the deviltry of his guardian, he was robbed and left penniless. He begged her father for a chance to earn his bread. The father spurned his petition. Failing in this effort, he begged for employment elsewhere, but was rejected. He then slept in a stable and almsot starved. As he told me, he often

SCENE 1

wept himself asleep, hungry and cold. In all this misery and pain that girl clung to him with affectionate, tender pity. It is to bear his dying words to her that I plead with you to let me enter your lines. I believe you brave, and a brave soldier will not drive me away. Do help me! Let me carry his last message of love to that girl who did not abandon him in his tears and want. To cross your lines will do your army no harm; but to me, to me it is dearer than life. Surely you will not join with all the others who made his life so desolate! Let it not be said that a soldier of the sunny, chivalrous South drove him back who begs admission to his friend; who begs to bear to his weeping love, the last emotions of a noble soul. No, no, you will not reject my poor entreaty! A soldier cannot spurn a soldier's prayer!

1st Soldier: That white rag you bear as a flag of truce will not be seen by our soldiers, and you will fall. Have you not something larger that can be more easily discerned. I do not want to see so noble a friend perish.

Jack: This is the only thing I could find in my haste to leave the camp.

1st Soldier (takes off his shirt which is white and pins it on gun used as a staff): Here, this can be more easily discerned at a distance. We cannot leave our post. Take this road (points); yonder is a skirt of

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woods. Avail yourself of that, for a random ball may strike you. You will not proceed far beyond that before you are seized by our scouts. Hand them this note; they will advance you to General Lee's headquarters.

Jack: Great God, soldier, you have the heart of a hero.

1st Soldier: You have no moments to waste if you want to see Tom Ewing before he dies. (Exit Jack.)

2nd Soldier: That fellow is loyal. I admire him, but it is risky to allow him to pass our lines.

1st Soldier: No risk. He will not go a hundred yards beyond the woods when he will be placed under guard.

2nd Soldier: But should he return before the battle, he will reveal our plans.

1st Soldier: That fellow is too honorable for such treachery; but he will not get a chance. He will be blindfolded before he reaches our breast works, and Lee is not the fool to let him return before the battle. But let us move along. (Exeunt.—Enters Irashus running and out of breath.)

SCENE 1

Irashus: Dis heah darkey am so badly scared that he hab losed hisself and can't find hisself again. Dis nigger am a lucky chicken. (Trembles.) I was neber so near the grabe yard in all my born days. I wonders if I is all here. (Examines himself.) Guess I is still all together. I is so confrusticated dat I goes around and around and winds up in the self same place. If dis nigger am back again in camp, he stays theah until dis heah war am concluded. (Enter the two rebel scouts. One runs after the other in a crouched attitude across the stage. Irashus sees them and trembles violently.) Well dar goes dem same rebs again. I is cotched yet, if dis darky does not make hisself mighty scarce. (Runs off in opposite direction.)

SCENE 2—Court Martial of Tom Ewing.

Major Silverston: Captain, bring the prisoner in. (Tom led in handcuffed.) Release his hands. (Addressing Tom) What is your name?

Tom: It is not necessary for you to learn my name.

Major: To inquire is only a formality, for we are in possession of your name. This little book found on your person reveals that. You are a Yankee soldier.

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Tom: I am a colonel in the Union army.

Major: You were seized within our lines. Your disguise tells your purpose. Are you not a spy?

Tom: Since you surmise my object, why trouble yourself with the formality of a trial.

Major: To do justice to our own honor as well as to give you an opportunity for defence.

Tom: I have no defence to offer. I entered your lines knowing the consequence if discovered and captured. Now I am prepared to meet that consequence without fear.

Major: What you could not do in a fair field of battle, you attempted to accomplish by treachery.

Tom: The charge of treachery I deny. In warfare contending armies have often had recourse to this stratagem. Because I am a spy you call my act treachery; but if the case were reversed and a Confederate soldier found within our lines for similar purpose, you would call it bravery.

Major: Of course we would. We do not call a spy a coward. We admire his pluck, though we must deal with him severely.

SCENE 2

Tom: I am content and do not murmur against the usages of warfare.

Major: Have you any claims against our justice which you have not stated?

Tom: None whatever. Having been selected for the hazardous duty, I understand the penalty and now ask no clemency.

Major: We regret to see a brave soldier die; but if we were inclined to mercy, our duty and our cause forbid it. The reward of a spy, if seized, is death. You will die a ten o'clock this morning. Captain, take Tom Ewing in charge and execute the sentence as directed by the rules of war. Colonel Ewing, if you have any message to send to your relatives you may give them to the captain in charge. We promise on the word of a soldier that it will be forwarded at the first opportunity.

Tom: You are both a soldier and a man. Accept my dying gratitude for this favor.

Major (shakes hands with Tom): I am sorry we met under such sad circumstances—good-bye. (Exeunt all but Major.) A brave soldier. His death will cause some mother's heart to break, but such is the fate of war. His execution had to be hurried, for ere the sun sets to-day there will be cause for many a mother's heart to break. (Exit.)

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SCENE 3—General Lee's Headquarters. General seated on a box with some of his staff.

Guard: General, a captain from the enemy's camp, bearing a flag of truce, desires an interview.

General Lee: Escort him here. (Exit guard.) A flag of truce! What can it mean at this moment? (Enter Jack Murphy and guard.)

Jack: General, I have come upon a mission of mercy.

General Lee: Pray what can it be? Mercy is usually a stranger to camps.

Jack: General Lee, confiding in your unexcelled qualities of both heart and soul, I have come to crave from you the life of Colonel Ewing who was captured within your lines.

General Lee: The sacred duty which I owe my army and my country forbids me granting your request. Colonel Ewing is sentenced to die as a spy. To release him would be a crime against ourselves. Were a Southern soldier to be caught within your lines on a similar tour, he certainly would die. We all know this is a rule of warfare.

Jack: In seeking his release, I know I am begging a boon that is never granted; but pardon Colonel

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Ewing and put him under oath not again to take up arms against you.

General Lee: It is impossible. I pity him and wish he had never crossed our lines, that we may be spared the pain of his execution; but since he has, then he must die.

Jack: Restore him to liberty; and if ever a Confederate soldier is taken in our army in the performance of such duty, I promise you I shall rescue him if it cost my life.

General Lee: A contract of that kind is impossible. It would be a bad precedent and ere long the Northern soldiers would be swarming into our lines with impunity. It grieves me to be unable to concede you this favor, but it is impossible. He must suffer the penalty. He knew this when he ventured within our breastworks.

Jack: But think, General, it will cause another fond heart to break.

General Lee: There are thousands of fond hearts at this moment breaking throughout the South. Would you have me increase that awful number by releasing a Northern spy?

Jack: No, General, the number is now too great both North and South; but Tom Ewing and I have

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fought side by side since the beginning of this cruel war. His heroism was often proven by his dauntless courage in saving my life. I have come to show him my gratitude by saving his.

General Lee: His heroism I do not question, for it requires courage to be a spy, but you are only wasting your time and mine.

Jack: Shortly ago, I met your guards. They refused me permission to cross your lines until I told them in part the mournful story of Tom's life. A hasty and brief statement of his wretchedness so awakened the ennobling tenderness of your guards' hearts that they not only permitted me to advance, but one took the shirt off his own back to make for me a flag of truce.

General Lee: I am proud of that guard and admire the qualities of soul which prompted him and which urged you to come and plead for your brave comrade; but I consider that the conduct of the guard was his duty and that your fidelity to Tom Ewing is an obligation of friendship; but my duty and my obligation to the South demand that the Colonel must die. Pardon me now, for other interests are pressing upon me. We must detain you within our lines until after the battle.

Jack (kneels by the General's side): General, another word. (Draws the handkerchief forth.) Look

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upon this handkerchief! It contains the tears of that friend who clung to Tom Ewing from childhood. She was spurned by her rich, cold-hearted father; she bore the sneers of her unkind sister, all for his sake. When he bade her adieu, she wept upon his noble heart and here are contained those tears of sorrow and of love. He told me if he were killed, to touch this handkerchief to his heart's blood and bear it to the friend of his soul; saying, "Give this to her and tell her that my last words were a prayer for her." Last night when he was parting with me, he gave me this to bear to her, for he believed we would meet no more. For two years and more I have shielded him with my life. He did not know me except as Jack Murphy, and now in this last struggle of death I kneel and beg you to spare him for that poor, broken-hearted girl who now begs his life from you. (Takes off disguise and remains kneeling.) Surely, General, you will not refuse her prayer whose heart has been pierced with pain a thousand times! Say, I may have him! And the future story of our common country will weep tears of gratitude on your grave. It is in your power! Say yes! There is the death bugle sounding! For God's sake say yes! For the honor of the South, for your fidelity to her flag, for the love of your wife and mother, say yes! (Sobs.)

General Lee: Yes, my girl. It shall never be said that the South spurned your tender prayer. You are a brave girl, but there is no time to lose. Mount

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my horse standing outside the tent, and guard, accompany her. Retain both within the lines until after the battle. (Exeunt both.) What chivalry in the North and South! I am proud that girl and her lover are Americans; but now, Generals, to the work which will cause tears and blood to flow. (Exeunt.)

SCENE 4—A rough coffin. Soldiers file in. Tom Ewing with guard. The former sits upon his coffin. Soldiers line up opposite.

Commander: Halt! About face! Attention! Take aim! (Beatrice runs in and screams, her hair falling over and down her shoulders; flings her arms about Tom's neck. The commander picks up the letter of pardon.)

Beatrice: O, Tom! (Faints.)

Tom: My God! Jack Murphy—Beatrice? (Kisses her.)

Commander: Ground arms. (Soldiers obey.)

CURTAIN.



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